

**Nasonville Fire District  
2577 Victory Highway  
Nasonville, Rhode Island 02830  
Special Informational Meeting**

**April 12, 2014**

**1. Call to Order:**

Michael Crane, Moderator called the Special Informational meeting to order at 1:08PM.

**Members present:** Board Members: Janet Raymond (Chair), Gerry Lapierre, Renee Boiteau, Jen Zuba, Paul Wright, Bettie Hatzell (Acting District Clerk), Dick St. Sauveur. Other district members: Chief Gus Eddy, John Mainville and Ron Lapierre, and Jeff Kasle (Litigation Attorney)

The moderator read the warrant for today's meeting.

**2. Collective Bargaining (Informational)-Jeff Kasle**

The Board has asked Mr. Kasle to provide an update of the petition filed by the Burrillville Firefighters Association. He further explained that a petition was filed in October 2013 and this petition states that the Burrillville Firefighters Association would represent the paid members of the department. The process that occurs once a petition has been filed goes as follows:

- the petition goes to the state Labor Relations Board
- informal hearing held in November 2013 to see if employer/employee can agree with bargaining unit
- Employer did not agree so formal hearing in January 2014
- primary issue was whether EMT/Firefighters were permanent employees
- State Labor Relations Board made a motion to dismiss the "permanent" employee issue
- Under legal advisement, based on the information from the Labor Relations Board & growing legal costs from Appeals, the board agreed to recognize the IAFF as exclusive representative of the paid EMT/Firefighters
- process of certification of union
- collective bargaining may begin as early as this spring with members from sides

Question: Sue Gartland had several questions from people asking her within the district. She wanted to know how come this is going on. What are they looking for? Why wasn't the board approached with these questions. In the past she expressed that the staff had gone to the department of labor. Sue explained that the department did what they asked. Now she's asking why they had to form a union.

Answer: Jeff presumed that the paid members might have felt that filing a petition to unionize was the best thing for them. We need to go forward now and in going forward, the district will bargain in good faith with the union. Both sides will make proposals and will come to a successful compromise.

Question: Norman Dalpe asked what the union would bring to this department. He said negotiating involved wanting more benefits, more wages, and more hours? He further said that this department has been in existence for 74 yrs. without a union. Why not negotiate with the people in the district? He also mentioned that there is no mention of a union in the charter.

Answer: Jeff said he never saw where a charter mentioned a union. It's a document that gives you taxing authority and establishes the board not how many employees you have & who would represent them. Unionization is an issue of running the district which is left to the board. The traditional view of a union is that they come in & want everything; however, negotiations are a two-way street. The union may ask for things but ultimately the employer must agree. Right now the union will negotiate with tax payers & those taxpayers are members of the board.

Mr. Dalpe expressed concerns of what the cost would be to the district & that the district doesn't have that kind of money.

Question: John Mainville asked what would happen if the tax payers did not agree with what the Operating Committee negotiated with the union.

Answer: Jeff said that in his experience that no agreement is final and ratification would go back to the taxpayers.

Question: Paul Wright asked if we entered into negotiations and we hit a deadlock situation, would it go into arbitration.

Answer: Yes the process to resolve would be an arbitration panel.

Paul remarked that it could be quite expensive to go to arbitration.

Question: Norm Dalpe asked if the final decision would be up to the taxpayers.

Answer: Jeff said it would be his opinion that prior to completion of negotiations, both sides would take back their tentative agreements back to their authorizing authorities for review.

John Mainville made the comment that it would be very unfortunate that this district could reach its demise due to non-resident employees who accepted the terms of employment and now want more, they should find employment elsewhere.

Jeff said that he had many years' experience and that he could not speculate but that his job was to negotiate a contract in good faith that will be good for the district.

### **3. Adjournment**

Michael Crane, Moderator adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Elizabeth A. Hatzell  
Acting District Clerk

